

Message

From: Partridge, Charles [/O=EXCHANGELABS/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=27DA56DA9A12472787EF56077099CF36-PARTRIDGE, CHARLES]
Sent: 12/7/2019 6:17:53 PM
To: Elgethun, Kai (ATSDR/DCHI/WB) [irz6@cdc.gov]
Subject: Re: EPA Responses to Butte Weekly Query (Health Study)

Reporter for a butte weekly newspaper. Former mayor.

Sent from my iPhone

On Dec 7, 2019, at 11:07 AM, Elgethun, Kai (ATSDR/DCHI/WB) <irz6@cdc.gov> wrote:

Thanks Charlie. Who is Matt Vincent?

From: Partridge, Charles <Partridge.Charles@epa.gov>
Sent: Saturday, December 7, 2019 12:53 AM
To: Elgethun, Kai (ATSDR/DCHI/WB) <irz6@cdc.gov>; Dorian, David (ATSDR/DCHI/WB) <irs1@cdc.gov>; Sudweeks, Scott D. (ATSDR/DCHI/WB) <zdg1@cdc.gov>
Subject: Fwd: EPA Responses to Butte Weekly Query (Health Study)

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: "Mutter, Andrew" <mutter.andrew@epa.gov>
Date: December 6, 2019 at 4:28:42 PM MST
To: Matt Vincent <matt@rampart-solutions.com>
Cc: "Partridge, Charles" <Partridge.Charles@epa.gov>, "Mylott, Richard" <Mylott.Richard@epa.gov>
Subject: EPA Responses to Butte Weekly Query (Health Study)

Matt,

As requested. I'm sending on behalf of Charlie. Let us know if you have any additional questions.

Q1) I felt that Dr. Hailer kind of put you on the spot in the meeting when she mentioned she'd already showed you her meconium data back in March 2019 and asked you to clarify what your change in response was to the same data now that it's in her report and now that it's published. Can you give me an official

statement as your answer to that question, and would you care to clarify for the record the details of that March 2019 meeting?

A1) The March 2019 meeting was intended as a meet and greet. The purpose was to introduce myself [Charlie Partridge] and Nikia Green to Dr. Hailer as she had recently published a paper on Butte and the Greeley neighborhood. This was our first time meeting. During the meeting Dr. Hailer showed me a single piece of paper with some numbers on it and explained a little bit about a meconium study that she and Dr. McDermott were working on. I mainly focused on the Pb and As results as these are the contaminants of concern for the Silver Bow Creek/Butte Area Superfund Site. We talked about how there are no reference levels to meconium and there is no information available to determine if there are any health effects associated with metals in meconium.

Q2) More relevant, now that the data is published with references, and has appeared on the front page of the daily newspaper, causing quite a stir, what is your detailed plan for next steps and a timeframe to complete it? E.G. In your estimation, how long will it take for EPA to conclude from Hailer/McDermott's raw data and additional samples whether we have an issue that needs further attention?

A2) EPA has sent an official request for the data and samples of this meconium study to Drs. Hailer and McDermott. Dr. McDermott has replied that they will be in contact with EPA shortly to discuss. EPA will begin evaluating the raw data package when received, and we believe it will take approximately 45 days to review and interpret. Additionally, if the requested samples are available and useable, EPA intends to work closely with the Superfund Health Study Working Group to determine the best avenue to analyze and interpret those samples

Q3) Relative to what you said at the Board of Health meeting about running remaining samples "blind" at an EPA, CDC or independent laboratory, which Katie confirmed there were remaining meconium samples; and her offer to go through in excruciating detail her methods, raw data, etc. -- Have you confirmed that she will send you her (and McDermott's) leftover splits and have you received or officially requested the study's raw data?

A3) See above.

Q4) Hailer made a very confident statement that she/McDermott had looked through all of their methods, data, etc. and ultimately concluded "No: we didn't make any mistakes." You made a number of statements that clearly indicated a need for EPA to "confirm", "looking at the study further" "delving into the data much deeper" and even went so far as saying "if the Butte data holds up" "if these (data) turnout." What are the main things you are looking at in the data and what do you make of Hailer's comment that there were no mistakes made?

A4) Again, EPA sent an official request to Drs. Hailer and McDermott and asked for samples and the raw data analysis of the output from the instruments used

in the study. It would be inappropriate for EPA to speculate without having reviewed all the data, but please be aware, close scrutiny of data that have potential public health implications (including our own) is standard practice. EPA continues to review various aspects of the report along with ATSDR and state and local partners.

Q5) Hailer and McDermott say in their study's published conclusion that their approach "provided straightforward evidence of elevated exposure to metals in a mining exposed community. The approach was inexpensive, thorough and required no advanced statistical analysis." Further they used the term "potential public health emergency." What is your reaction and assessment to these conclusions.

A5) EPA will not speculate on the conclusion, but it should be noted that there are no reference levels for metals found in meconium, which makes information on metal levels in meconium and its potential health implications difficult to interpret.

Q6) Please explain your experience in toxicology and with EPA and in that experience, what is your assessment/comparison of this particular "pilot" "proof of concept" study and how it is being amplified versus any other examples you've worked with or are aware of?

A6) I joined EPA Region 8 in Denver in the Spring of 2009. I have a bachelor's degree in biology from Midwestern State University and a PhD in Toxicology from Texas A&M University and performed my postdoctoral Fellowship at the University of Louisville School of Medicine in Environmental Cardiology. During my tenure at EPA, I have had extensive experience in some of the largest Superfund sites in the nation, with a focus on mining related sites and the associated contaminants.

Q7) You mentioned a study from Canada as the "gold standard" of meconium studies, which used >2,000 samples and as relevant study you are looking to for appropriate comparisons. Can you please send that to me and perhaps give me a reason why you hold it in higher regard to the other studies referenced in Hailer's study and in her presentation/comparisons?

A7) The Canadian study is the largest study that I know of in which meconium was collected and analyzed. The large sample size and study design make it a strong study worthy of consideration as we try to understand whether metals levels in Butte infant's meconium are elevated. Since the study collected samples from across 10 cities and did not focus on contaminated areas, the study sheds some light on levels of metals in meconium that one might expect to see in the general population. It should be noted however, the levels of metals in meconium that lead to adverse health effects was not an objective of this Canadian study.

Q8) Do you know anything about the NIH grant proposal Hailer/McDermott submitted and why it was unsuccessful?

A8) The grant was submitted to an entirely separate federal agency, the NEIHS (National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences). I am not aware of the specific requirements or criteria associated with the NEIHS grant program and have not had any contact with anyone at NEIHS about this grant.

Q9) Please feel free to add anything else, any other statements that you would like me to include in the story. Again, don't hesitate to call or email me if you have additional questions. Thanks again!

A9) Nothing additional at this time.

-30-

Best regards,

Andrew

Andrew Mutter

Director, Public Affairs
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 8 (Denver, CO)

Office: 303.312.6448
Cell: 720.520.3047

Twitter: [@EPARegion8](https://twitter.com/EPARegion8)
Facebook: [U.S. EPA Region 8](https://www.facebook.com/USEPARegion8)
Webpage: EPA Region 8 (Mountains and Plains)